



Agenda
The Maryland Council for New Americans
Adventist Hospital, Takoma Park
April 7, 2009

1. Opening Remarks and Welcome

Co-Chairs, County Executive Ike Leggett and Secretary Tom Perez gave greetings. In attendance: Barbara Gradet, Commissioner David Gray, Young-chan Han, Pastor John Jenkins, Margaret Kim, Father Joe Muth, Pastor John Odukoya, Michael Lin, Rabbi Weinblatt, Secretary Rich Hall, Pastor Ghandi Olaoye, Jere Stocks, Jimmie Walton Paschall, Ricardo Flores, Aris Mardirossian, Eric Seleznow, Gustavo Torres, Pastor Harlie Wilson, Naima Said, Adam Ortiz, Angela Lagdameo

2. Review of Minutes

The minutes from January 7 were accepted.

3. Presentation by Washington Adventist Hospital

Dr. Marilyn Lynk gave a presentation on Washington Adventist's "Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)." CLAS standards include, leadership diversity to include Board of Directors, new employee orientation/diversity training, culturally competent care training and education, translation of consent forms, health education materials, cultural diversity liaison role, qualified bilingual staff program, deaf talk technology, annual Strategic Plans from 2007-2011, Montgomery County Health Equity data collection, partnerships and collaborations to vulnerable populations, and the Community Health Disparities Progress Report as Initiative as benchmarks for Expanded Access initiative. The report is available on the Council website.

4. Testimonials of Diversity

After giving an account of his experiences immigrating to America, Joseph Eyong described different challenges that the African community faces in Maryland. Among them are: language barriers, inter-ethnic cultural animosity, fractured representation of the African voice, and a lack of an "umbrella" organization to coordinate various groups. He asked that the Council take these challenges into consideration when making recommendations and when outreaching to the African community.

Two testimonials were given in coordination with the International Rescue Committee. “Tikka,” a recent refugee from Bhutan appealed to the Council for increased language services. Myat Li works for the International Rescue Committee and described the desire for refugees to become self-sufficient in Maryland. Though free ESL classes are offered, Myat described that refugees face the stereotype that they are low-skilled, despite the high number of refugees/asylees with professional degrees. He cited the Iraqi population as those who have underutilized degrees. Myat stressed that the needs for immigrants/refugees over the first year, second year, and even third year are markedly different.

5. Reports from Working Group Chairs

Dr. Amjad Riar, Workforce, Gustavo Torres, Citizenship, Robin McKinney (on behalf of Olive Akhigbe), Financial Services, and Myron Quon (on behalf of Kien Lee), Governmental Access gave 1-page reports to the Council. All reports are available under “Council and Working Group Business” on the website.

6. Report Guidelines and Timeline

Adam Ortiz and Angela Lagdameo overviewed the Working Group Report Draft outline and the remaining timeline. Note: the timeline is located on the website’s homepage under “Council News.”

7. Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20pm